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NPA alumna Hayley Connors-Keith changes many lives, including her own, in Nepal

By Tehilla Horowitz
Staff Writer

Homes, temples, and schools were destroyed and more than 9,000 people were killed in the Nepal earthquake of 2015, called the Gorkha earthquake. The destructive earthquake, had a magnitude of 7.8, and not only destroyed physical structures, but also the lives of thousands of Nepalese people and put the already impoverished country into a terrible economic situation. An NPA graduate from 2009, Hayley Faith Connors-Keith, heard about the earthquake and immediately took the chance to support the traumatized country.

Connors-Keith was deeply affected by her experience at NPA and her passion for travel is rooted in her experiences at the school. “While attending NPA, I was able to travel outside the United States for the first time, which fueled my desire to continue to travel, work, and volunteer later on,” Connors-Keith said. Her changed perspectives and passion for education is also grounded in her time in NPA. Connors-Keith had wanted to travel to Nepal for some time before the news of the earthquake, but when she heard the terrible news, she knew she wanted to help as soon as

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PHOTO COURTESY OF HAYLEY CONNORS-KEITH

NPA alumnus Hayley Connors-Keith took her passion and drive to Nepal, where she helped to build schools and create better educational futures for Nepalese children. She attributes her love for travels and experiencing other cultures to the experiences she had during her time at NPA.

Strengthening the Bond of International Friendships

By Amelia Parker
Staff Writer

NPA further involved themselves internationally, as they hosted students from their Indian sister school, Anand Vidya Vihar (AVV) for the second exchange of the NPA/AVV student exchange program. For almost three weeks, starting in late March, ten students and two teachers from AVV in Gujarat, India, visited NPA and Humboldt County for a student exchange. The students and teachers stayed with host families, toured around Humboldt County and the Bay Area, explored nature, and learned firsthand about American life and culture.



PHOTO BY AMELIA PARKER

Aneri Pota, a student from AVV, experienced snow for the first time on a trip to Horse Mountain with her classmates and NPA host students.

The NPA/AVV student exchange began just over two years ago, in the winter of 2015, when NPA history teacher, Andrew Freeman, traveled with a group of students to Gujarat and established a sister school relationship with AVV. After visiting India in the winter, that group of NPA travelers was able to host their Indian host brothers and sisters in their own homes the following spring. In the winter of 2018, the exchange program was repeated. Students from NPA visited Gujarat and stayed with host brothers and sisters from AVV. The new host siblings were then given the opportunity to visit Humboldt County for themselves.

While here, members of the NPA community put in an exceptional effort planning the students’ time in Humboldt. Highlights of the visit included hiking through Fern Canyon, exploring the snow at Horse Mountain, learning

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Meet Moon Milkshake

By Abigail Hasting-Tharp
Staff Writer

The 60’s were a time of protest, self discovery, and breaking the social norms. It was a time when rebellion against authority was a movement, birthed and grounded within music.

Such a time has come again—a new generation needs a voice. The times are changing and youth are stepping forward to make their voices heard.

Moon Milkshake is an eclectic new band formed just this year by NPA seniors Fiona Shaughnessy, Mel Wardynski, and Emilia Von Einem Diggins (known to the stage as March Adstrum). Though the three had not performed at any of the previous Cabarets during their time at NPA, they had been talking about starting a band. With NPA’s 2017 Fall Cabaret approaching, they decided to go for it and make the band they spoke of become a reality; all they needed was a name.

“When we decided on our name, we were texting each other all these weird band names,” said Adstrum. “We chose the name ‘Moon Milkshake’ because it was playful.” Titles such as “Frog Juice,” “Milk Jug,” and “Yung Melk” were all in the running, but none compared to the space themed, alliterative name the bandmates decided on. The “Milkshake” half of the name is derived from their joint love of food, and “shake” refers to dancing.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CLARY GREACEN
Left to right: Fiona Shaughnessy, March Adstrum, Mel Wardynski.

Armed with their instruments and some catchy tunes, NPA’s hottest new band, Moon Milkshake, aims to not only play good music, but also make a difference with their music’s message. They shared that message at Arcata’s March for our Lives by performing songs by Bob Dylan as well as an original.

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Chrysanthemums, delphiniums, and sunny spring days

By Ruth Magee
Staff Writer

Every year, on the Friday closest to the first of May, NPA’s graduating class raids Arcata in search of green foliage and vibrant flowers. This flora is collected because NPA celebrates a special tradition to welcome the sunny spring days, and it is called May Day.

Traditionally, NPA’s May Day celebration consists of the senior class leading the rest of the school in learning how to dance the Maypole. Amy Miller, the school’s IB Coordinator, was born on the first of May, so celebrating May Day has always been one of her birthday traditions. Miller found May Day celebrations to be such an important recognition of spring, that she made sure NPA began celebrating it from the moment the school was formed.

NPA’s annual traditions like May Day, Halloween House, and Cotillion create an atmosphere of a close and welcoming community. “It’s the weird funky traditions that bring us together,” Miller said. These traditions are what tie NPA’s current students together, and give every alumni a shared memory to reminisce about.

While the senior class is occupied with body paint and decorating the maypoles, Miller divides the entire student body into two groups: the chrysanthemums and delphiniums. From there, NPA’s student population gets a crash course on how to dance the Maypole. The event is most fun when the sun is shining and the sky is clear, but some of Miller’s favorite May Day memories are from when the school celebrated in the rain.

For Nelli Major, a junior at NPA, May Day signifies a day of happiness and fun. Whenever Major thinks of May Day, “flower crowns and just lots of flowers immediately pop into my head.” While she does absolutely adore all the flowers, Major’s favorite part of NPA’s celebration is watching the seniors try to dance around the pole

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PHOTO COURTESY OF MADISON COOPER

NPA’s senior class poses for a shot while decked out in their May Day attire. Before the celebration, the seniors gathered blossoms to make flower crowns and decorate the maypoles.

COMMUNITY March for our lives

Citizens of Arcata band together to take a stand against gun violence in schools.

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ART Dancing Stars of Humboldt

NPA freshman Hope Magee rises to the top in local dance competition for the second year in a row.

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EVENTS Seal of Biliteracy

NPA seniors flex their linguistic skills as they vie for the acclaimed Seal of Biliteracy

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The Word Civility vs. Integrity

What's something you wish you had known as an underclassman?



Celeste Kastel Riggan

When you take on the IB program, I think it's really important to look at it not just as this really difficult task. I think it's important to look at it as seeing it's there to help you grow. That's all it's there to do. It's not there to intimidate you... Well, it is there to intimidate you, but that's part of your growth. It's there to work with you and help you grow into a better person.



Jack McLaughlin

The most important thing to learn earlier on, before the end of freshman year, is how to manage your time wisely. You have to think about your day and workload and plan things.



Erica Davis

I wish I had known that the IB and school doesn't have to take over your life. I regret not spending more time with my friends and my family, especially as an underclassman. I now realize that I can spend time with the people I care about and those who care about me. Support systems are so much more important than perfect grades and getting assignments in on time.



Gabriel Blank

Whenever you get a project or assignment, start doing it as soon as you get it. Just because something is assigned as homework doesn't mean you have to do it at home. In fact, it's much better to work during study and free periods because these things do seem like they'll pile up, but they'll start to go very quickly when you suddenly realize how much free time you have.

By Abigail Hasting-Tharp
Staff Writer

"Civility" is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as, "formal politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech," while the definition of "integrity" is, "the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles." These were the concepts of discussion during this year's Lions Club Student Speech Competition.

Lions Clubs International is a secular, philanthropic organization that was founded in 1916. Each spring, Humboldt's own Lions Club chapters offer a student speech competition where local students are given the opportunity to work on their public speaking skills by responding to a question relevant to the year.

This year, the question was: "what roles do civility and integrity play in our society?" The competitors were asked to present their response in the form of a ten minute speech, given to a panel of judges. The judges, who were community members such as professors, city council members, and writers determined the winner who would then proceed to further levels of the competition.

NPA students began competing in the Lions Club Student Speech Competition four years ago with the support of NPA teachers: Andrew Freeman, Arny King, and Jean Bazemore. Benefiting from the consistent encouragement of their teachers, NPA students now make up the majority of competitors, with this year's participants being only from NPA. "It's a great experience for the students who chose to compete," Freeman expressed.

For the 2018 Lions Club Speech Competition, NPA students presented in the Trinidad, McKinleyville, and Eureka Lions Clubs. Abram Rau, Omar Gadzhiev, Bow Piyasiriluksika, and Tawhid Atul competed in the Trinidad club, with the competition being held at Trinidad Town Hall. Muskaan Sagar, Keaton Sullivan, Lea Eider, and Siena Constanzo competed in the McKinleyville Lions Club branch. At their first level of competition, Gale McComas and Leo Peerson competed, with the event being held at a church in Eureka.

Atul, Sagar, and McComas won in their respective competitions and went on to the second round. Even in the heat of the competition, the three stressed how rewarding it was to share their opinions and hear the viewpoints of others.

Gadzhiev, a senior, commented on a specific concern: the confrontational aspect of the speeches. "People here generally have the same ideas on topics," Gadzhiev commented. He pointed out that, "Humboldt is a very liberal place." Despite the similarity in view points shared by high schoolers in Humboldt, Gadzhiev says he likes the Lions Club's speech format because, "it gives you an opportunity to argue in a polite way without direct contact, to express your ideas, and to feel safe."

Yet, this year's question did draw out more than one perspective from local contestants; differing opinions on civility and integrity were shared. Sometimes the two concepts were presented as inseparable equals. Atul claimed, "the society we live in right now is entirely dependent on civility and integrity." He explained that the two words were "completely related to each other." McComas had a similar idea, saying, "to have a functioning society, you need both [concepts] to balance everything out."

Other people believed in the importance of one concept over the other. Gadzhiev explained that his argument was for "integrity, whatever it takes," even at the expense of civility. Gadzhiev believes civility can act as a barrier

to true integrity and that integrity should be always be practiced.

Freeman said that the chance students are given to share their opinions is an empowering part of what makes the Lions Club Student Speech Competition so special. "It's an opportunity to take one of these topics and really think about what it means to you," he said.

After winning the second round of the competition, McComas went on to present her speech on April 28th at the final contest in Windsor, CA. McComas explained that the same process applied, with the judges determining the winner. "I had it mostly memorized. I got it out as well as I could," McComas recalled of her speech as given in Windsor. Of the five students to compete in Windsor, McComas won third.

Part of the challenge of writing a speech to present for the Lions Club is manipulating the English language in a way that is both articulate and interesting. Freeman explained that a good speech "really grabs the audience and makes them feel something inside." In an age where there seems to be no middle ground between adults wanting youth to fix past generations' woes while also having to "wait until you're older," the Lions Club Student Speech Competition gives students an opportunity to explore their voices.

The IB learner profile asks students to be risk-taking thinkers with the ability to communicate their principles and ideas. With this being at the heart of NPA's morals, it is no wonder the Lions Club Student Speech Competition is welcomed year after year by the NPA community.



PHOTO BY SARAH HASIUK

Gale McComas practices her speech before giving it to a panel of judges at the Lions Club Student Speech Contest. She won the first competition which was held at a church in Eureka this year.

MOON MILKSHAKE

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Each of the three contribute something individual to the group. "We've related ourselves to different artists," Wardynski said. Wardynski, who loves disco and plays bass ukulele for the band, is Freddie Mercury, while Shaughnessy is David Bowie. She plays electric guitar, ukulele, and sometimes the slide whistle. March Adstrum is the Mick Jagger of the group. In addition to playing electric guitar and piano, Adstrum also writes original songs that the band performs. All three work together to arrange and sing covers of their favorite classic songs.

Following their debut at the Cabaret, things started to pick up. After a mention on KHUM by some big fans, Moon Milkshake was invited to play on the radio.

"We were in awe of the experience," says Wardynski about their performance on KHUM. The team learned only the day before that they were going to be on the radio, and it was an exciting 24 hours. Adstrum described the feeling of being on the air as incomparable. "Nothing could go wrong!" she exclaimed.



PHOTO BY AMELIA PARKER

(From left to right) Mel Wardinsky, Fiona Shaughnessy, and March Adstrum play music together during NPA's spring cabaret. The trio have recently formed a band called Moon Milkshake and they enjoy both writing their own songs, and covering other artist's works.

Moon Milkshake was gaining momentum. In February, the band was invited to play at NPA's 2018 Elegant French Dinner. The band members dyed their hair pink for the gig, adding to their exciting stage persona. Moon Milkshake put on a concert for the audience, singing rock n' roll arrangements in their own style of "Bop." During their set, audience members and waitstaff alike were captivated by the show.

In early April, Moon Milkshake played at Humboldt's "March For Our Lives" rally. "That was one of the best experiences ever," recounted Wardynski. At an event by and for youth empowerment, it was only fitting that an eccentric youth band took the stage with their message of leadership, resistance and nonviolence.

The trio impressed the crowd with a medley of Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A Changin'" and "Blowing In The Wind." Moon Milkshake then sang Adstrum's original song "Stop! The! Violence!" to the thousands of marchers. It featured a rap section with lyrics supporting the march's message of "enough is enough" that rallied the crowd to join in a callback.

Moon Milkshake opened the house at this year's NPA Spring Cabaret. With flowers in their hair to represent springtime, the three performed an adaptation of "Paris" translated into French by Shaughnessy and "Under Pressure" by David Bowie and Queen.

Much like Bowie, Freddie Mercury and Jagger, Moon Milkshake is bold, and they challenge society's expectation of youth. They are creating something exciting and voicing their thoughts on pressing current issues. With their catchy hooks, driving rhythms, and empowering lyrics, this is a band you won't want to miss!



Seal of Biliteracy

NPA seniors expand their linguistic achievement

By Abram Rau
Staff Writer

Many employers favor candidates who can speak another language. The California Department of Education (CDE) set initiatives for students to study foreign languages by setting the standards needed to succeed at the highest level. In 2012, the CDE introduced the State Seal of Biliteracy after

Proposition 58 (aka the California Education for a Global Economy act) was passed. The passing of this proposition led to the creation of the California State Seal of Biliteracy, a program designed to give students opportunities to further their foreign language skills.

Since its founding in 2000, NPA has offered students the opportunity to study Spanish, French, German and Japanese. When Assembly Bill 815 was passed, it was seen as a great way for students, especially those at NPA, to be recognized for their ability to speak multiple languages. “We have the highest rate of success for the Seal of Biliteracy in Humboldt County,” IB French teacher Marceau Verdiere noted.

The California Seal of Biliteracy is used to “[recognize] high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing one or more languages in addition to English,” according to the CDE. The current requirements to earn the seal are a score of three in an AP foreign language test, a four on an IB foreign language test, or take four years of a foreign language and pass an oral examination. The student is then mailed one seal to be affixed to their high school diploma. “For the California Seal of Biliteracy, our aim is to have 100% of students reach that. This year, 50% of the French students and almost the same amount of Spanish students achieved that,” Verdiere explained.

Another option for students that are serious about continuing to study in another language is to get the Bilingual IB Diploma. This route is useful for students interested in studying abroad, as the student becomes accustomed to writing academic material in another language. “Getting the [Bilingual IB Diploma] requires that you take some of your IB exams in another language,” remarks Verdiere. Students must take at least two courses in the sciences and humanities in another language in order to qualify. However, due to the rigorous studying of a foreign language at such a high level, not many people attempt it.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTEL SHAUGHNESSY

(From left to right) Marceau Verdiere, Omar Gad, Ryan Meshulam, Fiona Shaughnessy, Erica Davis, Gaby Saavedra, Aaron Oliphant, and Justin Gyenis pose with their newly acquired Seal of Biliteracy at the Sequoia Conference Center in Eureka.

“One or two students do it a year,” Verdiere remarked. “Last year, we had two students get their Bilingual IB diploma.”

Studying another language at the international level is a very rewarding experience. According to the CDE, the purpose of this measure is to “encourage pupils to study languages, provide employers with a method to identify people with language and biliteracy skills, strengthen intergroup relationships and affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and languages of a community.” Educational institutions may also choose to use data related to language study as “college and career indicators” for the student.

The California Seal of Biliteracy was added to the diplomas of 46,000 students just last year. As more students have access to this program, there will be an increase of people with the ability to help make the world a better place.

INDIA

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about local businesses in Arcata, braving the frigid waters of Moonstone Beach as they participated in surf lessons, and touring the iconic redwood forests. The many excursions were made possible by the volunteer hours of parents and teachers.

Sophia Pelafigue, a chaperone for the 2018 NPA trip and who hosted a rising 12th year at AVV, Kenil Patwa, said, “After my daughter and I traveled to India on our own last year, we decided to go again with the school group, and I was touched by the way the families hosted us and did everything they could to make our experience in India the best it could be, which made me want to do the same for them.”

Pelafigue, along with Adam Hess, an NPA math and physics teacher and the other chaperone for the NPA group, accompanied the Gujarati students during their time in San Francisco and Santa Cruz. Pelafigue and Hess planned the group’s schedule, managing to include tours of Google, Fisherman’s Wharf, Twin Peaks, Stanford University, and the Santa Cruz boardwalk, as well as many other outings across the Bay Area. The San Francisco segment of their visit allowed the students to paint a more extensive image in their minds of what the United States is like, rather than limiting their perceptions to Arcata and Humboldt County.

The first apparent difference between India and the United States, according to the students, was the physical contrast. The streets of Vadodara, the city in Gujarat where the students are from, are littered with people, cars, rickshaws, and animals. Preet Patel, a junior at AVV, explained, “Discipline is so different in the streets here; you guys don’t have cows and dogs running in the street, and of course, no honking. There is way less pollution, and even the traffic rules that we have are different; pedestrians have the right of way in the US.” Even though there has been a recent effort in Vadodara to tidy their streets, there are still piles of trash that line the streets, highways, and amongst the housing complexes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF EMILY HANSHAW

Students from AVV pose as they hike through an iconic Humboldt landmark: Fern Canyon. Hiking Fern Canyon was one of the many adventures the students embarked on during their stay in America.

Because this trip was a school exchange, there was also time set aside for the students to visit NPA classes and compare their experiences to their schools back home. One of the AVV teachers and chaperones, Nidhi Srivastava, explained that in Indian schools, “We have a proper, regular uniform; they have to tie their hair with a pony. They can’t use nail polish, and they can’t carry a mobile with them.” The students were surprised at the freedom and responsibility that was put on the NPA students, as they wore what they liked and were seen continuously with their phones and other devices.

AVV junior Gunja Shastri noticed the relationship between students and teachers especially. “The way teachers communicate with their students and the humbleness the students have is really admirable,” Shastri remarked. “Everyone respects each other’s feelings and opinions. The freedom NPA students have is especially nice.”

While NPA has multiple sister schools, the relationship established between the students involved in this particular exchange program goes a little farther than one school visiting another. Hosting the students in their own homes, especially after being hosted in by students in India, gave NPA students a chance to connect with the Indian students on a deeper, more personal level. Leila Moss, a senior at NPA, hosted Shastri. Moss said, “I feel like I really connected with her because I stayed with her first. I was more understanding and more welcoming because I was put in the situation she was in.”

Other community members who had not traveled to India offered to host the students and teachers. Kimberley Cabot, who has a freshman daughter at NPA, as well as a son who is an NPA alumnus, hosted Srivastava. Cabot, despite not having met Srivastava before hosting her, spoke positively of the connection that she was able to make with her. “It’s been a total blessing, and I know I’m going to miss her,” Cabot expressed. “Every assumption that I had about India or she had about America was wrong, and we wouldn’t have learned that if we weren’t talking every night. We got deep into the understanding of each other’s countries, and then our differences and our similarities.”

Srivastava, who was selected as a chaperone because she is a teacher at AVV, knew the importance of the cultural immersion students experience when staying with a host family, and spoke about how much she had been excited about the trip. She explained that, “If we had stayed in a hotel or somewhere else, we would not have gotten the experience which we were looking for. Living with host families, sharing their lives, sharing their rules, their kitchen, sharing a part of their life, this helped us a lot in knowing them more.”

There are always changes to make when traveling to another country and even more when staying with a family that holds different traditions and a different lifestyle than your own. Srivastava reflected that, “There are always adjustments, even if you are moving within your own country, but I don’t think that we faced any major challenges. Little changes were there, but after all, God has made us all. We all have that nature that we can adjust in any condition. But as far as challenges, we all had a wonderful time, we will cherish these moments. It is a lifetime experience.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOPHIA PELAFIGUE

Local pilot Jack Roscoe treated the visiting Indian students to a private flight in his plane. The private flight, however, was much shorter than the flight the students took to get to the United States, which lasted over 15 hours.

Is Facebook a useful tool for NPA students?

By Omega Gaskill
Staff Writer

For many NPA students, Facebook is a highly useful tool, as well as a socially interactive platform.

For years, each class had a group Facebook page for the members of their year. These groups worked constructively for several reasons: they acted as a 24/7 homework support-line, community bulletin where students could post upcoming events, and occasionally as an outlet for members to chat with supportive classmates about relevant topics. Thanks to Facebook’s easy to navigate features, the monitoring of pages by student administrators was simple, although seldom necessary. In addition to student-run pages, there is a page named “NPA Community News,” where students, teachers, and parents can post and view relevant material. All in all, the NPA Facebook pages seemed to be a collection of easily accessible, well run pages for NPA community members.

This system worked well until recently when there seemed to be an increase in “anti-Facebook” high schoolers with their own agendas and social media platforms. For an unknown reason, younger high school students (generally this year’s freshmen and sophomores) have a stigma against Facebook and view it as the social media for millennials and baby-boomers, despite striking claims and testimonies towards its usefulness in group-related organizations. Although the sophomore class does indeed have a Facebook group, eager participants are few and far between, and a multitude of others have spoken up regarding their passionate dislike of the web platform. Some find it boring, confusing, or

a waste of time, although the same could be said about any number of social media platforms. “I just don’t like it!” sophomore Autumn Wright exclaimed. “It’s just so confusing. I’m too old for that kind of thing.” Wright believes that social media does not have to be the only method of student communication, while she acknowledges that a small number of her classmates disagree. “Why should I have to have a type of social media in order to talk to my class? The majority of our class does not use Facebook to communicate with each other, and it works just fine for us.”

While there have recently been numerous legal matters involving Facebook, none of the issues in question affected or related to the type of group page which “NPA Community News” is. No group platforms are enforced by the school, but many students encourage their peers to participate in using Facebook as an educational tool.

Although there are numerous other ways for academic groups to interact online such as Instagram Direct Messages, Whatsapp, and group text messages, the reason why Facebook has been so popular in past years is in part thanks to its unique event-sharing feature. As a school, NPA is involved in a multitude of proceedings at which members of its community are encouraged to attend, and by using Facebook to create and share events, the hassle of often confusing organizational procedures is eliminated. Facebook makes it simple for individuals to address the group as a whole, without their message becoming “lost” among others. Essentially, having a consistent, trustworthy platform used to communicate with classmates is important to creating a well-run community.

Marching forward to safety

By **Aria Cabot**
Staff Writer

On a cold, wet day on March 24th, nearly 1,000 concerned citizens gathered together at the Arcata Playhouse to make a statement. Across the nation, hundreds of thousands of people did the same. Signs were raised in solidarity for the ones lost to unnecessary gun violence, proclaiming hope for a better future. The anti-gun violence movement has been one of the largest youth protests since Vietnam.

Students gathered to fight for their right to not be scared at school. Many different people spoke and performed in support for gun control and to stop gun violence, including NPA’s own Moon Milkshake, who sang famous songs and changed some of the lyrics to make them inspiring and relevant. The mayor of Arcata, Sophia Pereira, spoke, apologizing for the unnecessary tragedies and later marching to prove she cared. Foreign students from different countries and cultures, including Bow Piyasiriluksika and Muskaan Sagar from NPA, spoke about gun control laws in their own countries. It was eye opening to see the difference in laws and how few shootings their countries of origin have suffered.

“I spoke out about gun control because I believe students deserve to be safe at school because our school is like our home and no one deserves to feel threatened in their home,” explained Piyasiriluksika who is from Thailand. “I had a lot of fun speaking at the march. It was an honor. I’m really happy I got to help make a difference to stop school shootings and make a change for the better,” Piyasiriluksika expressed.

After the speeches, all the students in attendance took their place at the front of the march and started chants. The students led everyone to the plaza. The train of people was an uproar of chanting, yelling, and music with a marching band called Bandemonium that lifted the spirits of the marchers in the pouring rain. Signs were seen saying, “Guns don’t make school safer” and “Enough is enough.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF CLARY GREACEN
Sophia Escudero (left) and Denali Brown (right) proudly hold signs they made as they marched in the cold and the rain to protest the current gun regulations that they feel are not strict enough.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CLARY GREACEN
Community members rally together as a unified force fighting for children’s safety in education institutions. signs proclaimed slogans such as, “Enough is Enough” and “Stop confusing Liberty with Weaponry.”

I marched for universal background checks and to stop school shootings, but more personally, I marched to say ‘no’ to teachers having guns. Guns in schools won’t make us feel any safer. The idea of having teachers carrying guns is scary; it is unreasonable and uncalled for,” NPA freshmen Jalina Richio argued. “I had a lot of fun marching with my friends and making a difference. It was nice to see everyone standing up for what they believe in and showing what they could do.”

The fact that such a large amount of Humboldt County citizens came to march in the rain shows the obvious support for the movement in the local area. Every marcher was wet from the rain, but still felt proud of their contribution. Measures have been taken and will continue to be taken to end gun violence. The Arcata community will continue to stand up for their beliefs until they can feel safe.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CLARY GREACEN
NPA student Abram Rau (second from the left) marches in solidarity with his community in protest. Even though it rained, many people came out for the protest.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CLARY GREACEN
Aiden Lovett holds a sign she made in support of stricter gun regulations. The streets of Arcata were packed as people of all ages came to support changes in firearm legislation.

Pigeons

The one about Omar

By **Omar Gad**
Staff Writer

“Hello, my name is Omar,” I repeated to myself, “Hello, my name is Omar, I am from Russia,” echoed in my head again, “Hello, my name is Omar, I am from Russia, I do not know English very well.” My final dress rehearsal continued as the void of the dark sky beneath the airplane shrunk, and every second reduced the distance between me and a place destined to become my new home.

My old life in Moscow had many advantages, and the greatest one was living side by side with the pigeons. There was nothing more reassuring to the shy, quiet, lonely child that I was, than the fact that pigeons needed me. In my head, I was crucial for the survival of a glorious army of pigeons that swarmed all over Moscow and covered its roads with beautiful yet dull, grey feathers. And I, like an imperial leader or rather, like a kind father, with tiny crumbs in my pockets, fed them and provided for them. Every pigeon somehow immediately communicated the presence of me, or perhaps of the food, to all his little pigeon friends. One pigeon after another would find me, and every incoming pigeon increased the radius of communications with other pigeons, thus transforming my little crumbs into messages, that I believed were sent across all of Moscow.

Pigeons are animals that possess so many qualities that people never notice. Perhaps, people do not notice pigeons at all. Due to the number of them and their annoying nature

(which I find merely lonely), people do not pay attention to the existence and life of these creatures. Children, however, notice them. Only through the kids’ eyes, immense friendly families of pigeons in Moscow gain importance, light, and recognition, and even adults have to pay attention to the fat clumsy birds because of their children. But as children grow up, pigeons become part of the gray landscape of dirty Moscow, as indistinguishable as the stars on the daytime sky.

Pigeons have never been considered to be beautiful, yet the death of pigeons is the most graceful act one can ever witness. They die alone, yet they never do. The first immediate signs of a pigeon living its last days of life is the inability to fly, and a minimal amount of movement. The pigeon simply sits, perhaps walks slowly, pondering around, checking this or that. The pigeon lacks energy so that one can simply walk up and pick up the chubby bird, but no one ever does. My parents never allowed me to, but I always hoped that I could save one.

The pigeon will remain sitting in the same area for a couple of days, just gazing at people or the sky, perhaps remembering the days of its youth. And so, the little guy sits on a sidewalk, untouched, receiving food from a kind stranger or an old friend. Sometimes, this state can last for weeks, but usually, it lasts only around six days. Then, one morning, the bird is gone, and the spot it once occupied becomes empty. I imagined the pigeon suddenly using its last bit of strength to fly up really high and disappear in the sky, or somehow recovering and finding his family, or just vanishing to find a new home.

The magic of that disappearance was broken early one morning when I saw a street cleaner pick up a pigeon and throw him away. Yet, what no adult will ever admit, is that during those five to fifteen days of a little pigeon sitting in one place, while they pass him several times a day, they grow used to him, and develop an emotional attachment.

Then, in the morning, when they find the spot empty, a small but deep feeling of sadness grows, surprising even the toughest of hearts. People mourn, quietly, without saying the words or even thinking about it. But those little feelings in people’s hearts make pigeon’s deaths less lonely, and only in the end, does the bird receive just the tiny bit of recognition and love that it always wanted and deserved infinitely.

However, the childhood of pigeons happens away from everyone’s eyes; tiny pigeons are never seen following their father or mother. This lack of baby pigeons was a problem of the first importance in my little head. The inability to see pigeons in my age group made me think that perhaps, they do not exist and that perhaps, pigeons do not have babies and do not reproduce, but are just always there. This chain of thought can lead to a dangerous notion, for if one believes that something always and forever exists, then it does not matter if it exists at all. But pigeons mattered, and I knew that, and I knew that they need me, and perhaps even loved me.

Now, one starts to wonder why I wrote so much about pigeons. This is because I have experienced the feeling of being important, loved, and needed only twice: when surrounded by a crowd of pigeons, and during my time at NPA. Love is too much to ask; I always knew that. Love cannot be expected, yet it is never unexpected. It is always in the state of suspense that can either remain suspended forever or manifest itself - just like a pigeon remains suspended in the air, until he sees little Omar throwing down a piece of bread. The pigeon slowly descends, the void of the dark sky beneath him shrinks, and every second reduces the distance between the pigeon and me. “Hello, my name is Omar, I am from Russia, I do not know English very well.”

MAY DAY

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when the weaving gets really tight near the bottom.

Celeste Kastel Riggan, a senior at NPA, also loves May Day and spring in general. “I think for the seniors the day is different than for other students because it commemorates the end of our time at NPA and you’re just celebrating spring and covering yourself in flowers. I think it’s a great tradition because how can you be sad when there are flowers everywhere?” Kastel Riggan thinks that the best May Day celebrations happen when the seniors work hard to ensure that the whole school feels included in the festivities.

“I think it’s best when the seniors incorporate the rest of the school, and there definitely is part of the day when the focus is on the seniors getting dressed and getting ready, but then once the rest of the school is incorporated and the momentum is kept up and the spirit is spread through to the rest of the school, that’s when it’s a successful May Day,” she explained. Kastel Riggan has found that the Maypole Dance is most fun when the groups are competitive, but in a joyful and energetic way.

The maypole dance has always been performed to drumming since the formation of NPA. However, Miller reminisces to a time when, “we had some fairy harp music, and very wonderful hand drummers and other percussion instruments.”

As the days start getting longer and the school year comes to a close, NPA’s graduating class will come to realize that it’s these treasured traditions that will sorely be missed. Because, at the end of the day, what makes NPA so special is the community. Miller elaborated by saying, “Community is what makes people want to get up in the morning and actually come to school. So it is very important that we dance around closet poles with plastic surveyors tape because it actually means something.”



PHOTO BY SARAH HASIUK
Seniors Celeste Kastel Riggan (left) and Ruth Magee (right) pose for a photo after dancing their last Maypole Dance of their high school career. The pair decorated maypoles with flowers and led underclassmen in the traditional May Day festivities.



Dancing stars of Humboldt

By Omega Gaskill
Staff Writer

When a collection of Humboldt County’s most talented dancers came together to be a part of an annual showcase, the atmosphere was full of passion, perseverance, and talent.

The Dancing Stars of Humboldt competition was founded in 2016 by Rima Greer and Melissa Hinz, two prominent members of Humboldt’s dance community. Greer works as both a choreographer and member of the costume department at North Coast Dance, while Hinz frequently teaches many styles of dance including jazz, tap, and ballet in Arcata and beyond.

This year’s performances included tap, jazz, ballet, contemporary, hip hop, and belly dancing. Studios such as North Coast Dance, Trillium Dance Studios, and The Academy of Irish Dance and Music, as well as many independent performers showcased their talents at the competition.

The competition works simply: dancers audition several months before the showcase in hopes of being selected to compete. On the day of the competition, the dances are performed at the Arkley Center for the Performing Arts, and the judges pick several finalists, for whom the audience later votes by way of applause. This year, seven finalists were selected to vie for bronze, silver, and gold. This year’s winners were Rebecca Nugent, Caitlyn Nolen, and taking gold, NPA’s own Hope Magee.

Magee, who is currently a freshman, has been dancing for 10 years, taking styles from ballroom to hip hop, although ballet is by far her favorite. She trains every day, and even teaches classes for younger children several times per week. This was Magee’s second time winning the competition, and the prize money has been instrumental in helping to cover the fees for the dance programs she attends. “This year, the money I received will be going towards my summer intensive, and my dance school in the fall,” Magee said excitedly.

What makes Dancing Stars of Humboldt such a unique competition experience is that it is inclusive of as many styles of dance as the competitors wish to audition with. Dancers have presented classical variations from ballets, self-choreographed contemporary works, and even traditional African dances. “I performed a neoclassical piece choreographed by Heather Sorter, and a contemporary piece choreographed by Theodore Constant,” Magee said. For her, performing is something she looks forward to greatly, while never losing sight of her dedicated work ethic. “I only get nervous if I’m worried about slipping. Otherwise, I just go over my dance a bunch of times in my head before performing, and make sure that I’m really stretched out,” Magee explained.

Competitions such as Dancing Stars of Humboldt are wonderful opportunities for up-and-coming dancers to be noticed by members of their community, while also providing them with scholarship opportunities necessary to fund their study of dance in many of its various forms.

“Both of my solos had been performed at other competitions, but this was the perfect time to perform them again! The people in charge of organizing ‘Dancing Stars’ were really supportive,” Magee elaborated. She encourages other dancers interested in competing and performing to, “expect nothing and appreciate everything.”



PHOTO BY KEENAN HINZ

Hope Magee performs her solo “Of Separation,” choreographed by Theodore Constant. Magee has been dancing for 10 years, and this was her second time winning the Dancing Stars of Humboldt competition. She hopes to continue dancing throughout high school, and one day dance professionally with a company.

NEPAL

from page 1

she got the opportunity.

“Intuitively, I knew I had to go to Nepal even though I wasn’t sure why.” Exactly one day after

her 26th birthday, Connors-Keith got the chance to travel to Nepal for the first time. There, she found a recovery organization called “NGO All Hands Volunteers,” a disaster and relief organization based in the U.S. She spent her time in Nepal volunteering for three weeks, helping to build a secondary school with 16 classrooms. “During that time, I was inspired by the people I worked with from all over the globe. I had never seen such hard-working individuals volunteering for free and sharing a common goal: to build sturdy schools for the community so kids can have a safe space to learn. I fell in love with my experience, the local people and the beautiful landscape. I knew I would be back,” recollected Connors-Keith.

Her second chance to return to Nepal was in the fall of 2017. Her original plan was to stay and volunteer for a month but she couldn’t bring herself to leave and continued to extend her time there. “Why would I leave a place I love when I didn’t have to?” Connors-Keith questioned. She remained in Nepal for another three months and until the end of April, when the project reached its finale.

The organization Connors-Keith is associated with does a multitude of things to help out the community in Nepal and rebuild the damaged country. The main focus is to rebuild schools so that the children could continue with their education. They work with local masons to build resilient schools and WASH (Water, Sanitary, and Hygiene) programs in more rural areas. More than 70 schools have been built and another six are in the process of being built. The group’s efforts have allowed 8,600 children to be given the opportunity of an education. However, it is not only the children who benefit from the new schools, the entire community is impacted and flourishes because of these critical facilities. “We are not just building schools, but creating relationships and opportunities for individuals,” said Connors-Keith. Connections are also very important to the organization. They hold english classes for the students and masons where it gives them a

chance to build relationships within the community. The volunteer base also holds a weekly event where music fills the air and community members come together to enjoy dinner and dancing. “It’s one of the best nights of the week because it is another time to connect and share with each other,” Connors-Keith recollects.

Connors-Keith’s found that the normal comforts she took for granted in the U.S. were not available in Nepal, and she calls her experience in Nepal “life changing” and something she would gladly do again. Taking a proper shower, having access to proper heating, sleeping in a bed, and driving on smooth roads, were not options that she had in Nepal. “It’s not always easy living in the rural mountains of Nepal,” she said. Connors-Keith lived in a tent for months, taking bucket showers, washing her clothes by hand, and spending hours in cramped bus rides. While these activities may seem trifling to the average American, Connors-Keith found that putting so much effort into simple daily routines allowed her to live more in the present time. “I have realized that because I am doing something rewarding, in a place that I love, all of those seemingly rough differences in lifestyle don’t bother me anymore. It’s not about what you have or what money you make for a living, it’s about what you give which creates a life worth lived.”

The three years that Connors-Keith spent volunteering in Nepal, were the most joyful times that she had ever experienced in her life. Knowing that she was making a big difference was something that she cherished, but she also enjoyed the simple moments such as dancing with a new companion. Her faith in humanity was restored while working with people from all over the world, all with one goal; to simply give back. “We are separated by stereotypes and borders but when you have the opportunity to work and live with people from all over the globe, your perspective changes,” stated Connors-Keith. The world that we live in today is heavily focused on earning degrees or earning a prestigious title for yourself, but at the end of the day, “it’s not about having a special role but rather finding an experience that allows you to feel joy and one that you find rewarding. Simply shoveling or sifting sand can be significant because it contributes to the whole.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAYLEY FAITH CONNORS-KEITH

Hayley Faith Connors-Keith (middle) plays with two young Nepalese children. The NPA alumna traveled to Nepal with a service group called “NGO All Hands Volunteers” to build houses and schools for families affected by recent natural disasters.

NPA’s students discover mother nature and themselves



PHOTO BY IYA ORTIZ-BECK

Emerald Lake glistens in the sun while snow melts on the mountains above. Students who went on the backpacking trip hiked over 15 miles to witness the beauty of Emerald Lake and Sapphire Lake.

ence for me was seeing the students who did not have much experience with backpacking really discover their strengths and their abilities and find out that they could hike and climb as far as they did,” King said. He was proud of all the students that pushed themselves outside of their comfort zones and developed more as individuals. “It is really cool to see someone grow into what they are capable of and we really saw that in a couple of students. I think that when they got home on Sunday night they had a way greater sense of self capability than when we left, and that’s what backpacking is all about.”

By Ruth Magee
Staff Writer

of these majestic mountains.

The group hiked to both Emerald and Sapphire Lake. This specific trail was chosen because it is a relatively easy trail that meanders through meadows that are surrounded by towering, snowy mountains. The hike is nothing short of utterly beautiful, and anyone that hikes this trail returns home in complete awe of mother nature.

Arny King, NPA’s history and P.E. teacher, collaborated with Rose Myers, a junior at the school, to plan the unforgettable trip. Ten students and three chaperones hiked approximately nine and a half miles to Morris Meadows where the group camped. Even though the group was really large, Myers thought that the size of the trip allowed for new friendships to be forged. “When you go backpacking you form a super unique, close bond with whoever you go with. Even if you are not super close with someone at the start of a trip, by the end you’ll be good friends,” she commented. Myers continued by saying that, “the bonds you make are unique because you’re all challenging yourselves and learning what you can do. It’s beautiful and it always feels really great to know you have hiked far and got there yourself without cars or bikes, just the power of walking.”

King also enjoyed watching the students form everlasting bonds, but for him the best part of the trip was seeing everyone on the trip grow individually. “The most beautiful experi-

Snow-capped peaks, crystal clear lakes, and luscious green meadows are what the Trinity Alps are famous for. After a four year hiatus the NPA backpacking trip is back, and this year they ventured deep into the heart

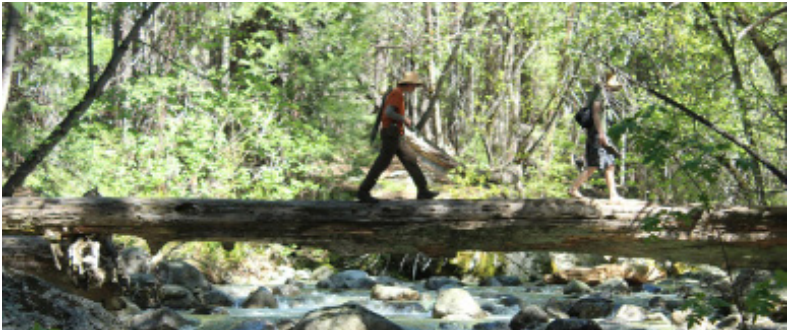


PHOTO BY IYA ORTIZ-BECK

Michael Scott (left) and Finn Tetrault (right) walk across a log. Below them, a river rushes by. The two sophomores went on the NPA backpacking trip and had a really fun time.



Reviews

Small Great Things

By Iya Ortiz-Beck
Staff Writer

Justice, race, and prejudice are three of the most prevalent and important issues in modern society. Jodi Picoult uses Small Great Things to address each of these problems in a heartbreaking story of an African American nurse who is unable to fulfill her requirements due to the prejudice of a white supremacist. Picoult is most commonly known for her 2004 novel My Sister's Keeper, and each of her last eight novels have reached #1 on the New York Times Bestsellers List.

Ruth Jefferson is a labor and delivery nurse at a Connecticut hospital. Leading a relatively normal life with 20 years of experience as a nurse and raising an 18 year old son, Ruth does not often think about her race as an obstacle in her life, and is defined by her dedicated work ethic. During one of her hospital shifts, she is assigned to check on a newborn. Instantly, the parents are awkward around her and the father even seems upset. Ruth is reassigned to a different patient. Her coworker then tells her it was because the parents are white supremacists and do not want her near their child. Ruth is ordered to not touch the child or she may lose her job. The next day, Ruth is watching the newborns and sees the baby go into cardiac arrest. She briefly hesitates for fear of losing her job, and then begins performing CPR on the child. When it is revealed that Ruth aided the baby, she becomes entangled in a messy court case. Ruth's lawyer is Kennedy McQuarrie, a public defender, who happens to be white and does not believe that bringing race into the courtroom is a good idea. During the trial, Ruth tries to keep life normal for her son, but with the conflicts she faces and the media the case draws, it's hard for her to know what to do. Eventually Kennedy and Ruth need to gain each others trust and realize that many things they thought they knew, may be wrong.

Picoult switches perspectives between multiple characters, and is able to clearly show the reader what each is thinking, which enhances the book and the readers knowledge of each character. This novel puts you in the mindset of an avid white supremacist, a confused lawyer, a hurt nurse and her activist sister. It forces you out of your comfort zone and into a realm of uncomfortable each person should face. In the society we live in today we need to talk about the things that make us uncomfortable, and acknowledge that there are issues in our system. Picoult forces us to do so while reading "Small Great Things," which allows me to highly recommend this insightful read.



Into The Wild

By Autumn Wright
Staff Writer

Jon Krakauer's "Into the Wild," is a story about a young man who starved to death in the Alaskan Wilderness in the summer of 1992.

To the people he met on the road and the drivers that gave him a ride, he called himself Alex. The name his parents gave him was Christopher McCandless but in his travels he used the name Alexander Supertramp. Christopher gave his \$25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and possessions, cut off his family, and created a new life for himself outside of the societal norms.

Christopher's backpack contained not much more than books, rice, and his .22-caliber rifle as he walked into the forest to live off the land or die trying. It was April when he got there, which is still winter in Alaska. He called this journey, "the climactic battle to kill the false being within."

Christopher kept a journal of his travels, but it was so full of his philosophical ideas and quotations from his favorite authors (Jack London and Henry David Thoreau) that it was difficult to get a clear sense of where he was and what he aimed to do. Although, one thing was clear: he chose to not be a part of modern society.

One may be wondering, "why was this guy such a big deal?" Why should the reader care if he was careless with his life? His death was not that different than the deaths of many people who wandered into the wilderness seeking adventure, unaware of what would come. Yet, Krakauer tells Christopher's story with a poetic earnestness.

Krakauer takes the reader through the descriptive discovery of Christopher's body in an old abandoned bus, back to his childhood, the events that shaped who he was when he stepped out of the truck in Alaska, and the two restless years he spent roaming and trying to figure out where to go. Through the book we learn more about Christopher, and his story becomes more intriguing and captivating.

Through Christopher's journal, he expressed his hatred for society. The son of accomplished and prosperous parents Christopher detested the world of achievement and luxury. He graduated high school, and went on to college. After graduating from Emory University, he began his journey, and left his previous life behind.

Krakauer tracked down virtually everyone who knew, or had even met Christopher during his two years of wandering. Those who knew him, met him, and told his story helped Krakauer to create a portrait of Christopher and the adventure he embarked upon. Who he used to be never seemed to matter to the people he met.

Was Christopher's passion for nature and being free really just a struggle within himself? Do we all not have that struggle within us? While reading "Into the Wild," the reader tries to make sense of their own need to be separate from society, and somehow can relate to him.

The question of whether or not Christopher intended to die while on his journey in Alaska is the question we are all left with. The book can be seen as a slow search looking for the answer, where the conclusion must be reached by the reader. Even if Christopher's death was meaningless, by the end of the book, the reader sympathizes and cares for him.



VILLARD PUBLISHING

The Shape of Water

By Mattea Denney
Staff Writer

"The Shape of Water" is a whirlwind of genres, culminating into one artistic masterpiece. Director Guillermo del Toro's movie includes influences of film noir, action, romance, fantasy, and historical drama, culminating in a movie that is well deserving of the award it received at this year's Academy Awards: Best Picture.

Heading up the cast is English actress Sally Hawkins, who dazzles as Elisa Esposito, a voiceless janitor at a government facility where she discovers a classified "asset," a fish-human hybrid from South America. Elisa slowly develops a close relationship with this creature, and begins to realize that the people she works for may not be doing the right thing. While going up against the often misogynistic environment of 1950's America, as well as the federal government, Hawkins' character attempts to rescue this creature, whom she has fell in love with. That love is the simple, central theme of this visually complex film. A love story at heart, "The Shape of Water" seduces audiences into its adventurous plot.

Visually, "The Shape of Water" is nothing short of stunning. The color and light used in the film are reminiscent of film noir, and the films that were popular during the time period that this movie takes place. In fact, del Toro sprinkles nods to films of the past throughout the movie, including Elisa's apartment, which is above a theater that screens now-classics like "Mardi Gras" and "The Story of Ruth." Following immense successes such as "Pacific Rim" and "Pan's Labyrinth," del Toro outdoes himself in the direction of "The Shape of Water."

This film is a thought provoking, inventive, and dazzling piece of art that captured audiences at the Venice International Film Festival and beyond, with it eventually winning the Academy Award for Best Picture. After seeing this movie, it is impossible to not see why it won such a prestigious award. "The Shape of Water" is an instant classic, and a must-see for any film lover.

DIRECTED BY GUILLERMO DEL TORO
RATED R



20TH CENTURY FOX

The Post

DIRECTED BY STEVEN SPIELBERG

By Caleb Weiss
Staff Writer

Steven Spielberg captures the essence of the Pentagon Papers with his mesmerizing film, "The Post." It is a cinematic work that, with help from history, tells a compelling story and establishes itself as one of the best films of 2017.

This film takes place in 1971 and focuses on three seemingly competing entities, the Washington Post, the New York Times, and the United States government. Daniel Ellsberg, played by Matthew Rhys, stole and spread the "Pentagon Papers" which exposed the US government for lying to the public about the Vietnam War. Ellsberg first gave the papers to the New York Times and then to the Washington Post. After the first article was published, the US government tried to retract the article and also tried to put a ban on anything that involved the Pentagon Papers, which were supposed to be classified. The US Supreme Court ruled against the government and all newspapers were allowed to print about the Pentagon Papers because the government was clearly breaking the first amendment.

Kay Graham, played by Meryl Streep, who was the owner and publisher of the Washington Post during 1971, was the first woman to ever own a national newspaper. It was hard for her to gain respect from her board, which was completely made up of white men, but during the Pentagon Papers scandal, Graham led the newspaper to the relevance it possesses today. Streep did a spectacular job showing the key role that Graham played in the ordeal. Streep also masterfully portrayed Graham's resilience and strength when everything was on the line for herself and her beloved newspaper.

"The Post" was nominated for both the Best Picture and Best Leading Actress Academy Awards, and one watch of this film will make it clear why this movie was so successful.



20TH CENTURY FOX

Thank you to all the Heron Herald staff for your hard work and dedication

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PHOTO BY MATTEA DENNEY

Tehilla Horowitz sits in a car to demonstrate her opinions about self driving cars; she has vowed to never ride in one. Self driving cars are starting to seem like they could become a reality in the near future, but it is up to individuals to assess the risks and benefits associated with these cars and to decide whether or not they want to take part in this movement.

The future of driving

By Caleb Weiss
Staff Writer

Are self-driving cars the future? With the concept of driverless cars becoming more developed, popular, and possible, they may end up being the transportation mode of the future. Many companies have developed self-driving cars that are controlled by a mechanical navigation system and have no driver. The idea of a car driving on its own can be intriguing but can also pose potential dangers. With cars acting as chauffeurs, the possibilities and purposes of these cars seem limitless. The danger of these new cars, however, is the potential for an error or glitch in the system that could result in a crash. The crashing of a self-driving car can result in many horrible possibilities which is why the reality of self driving cars is still not present.

For example, Uber Technologies Incorporated, which is a peer-to-peer ride-sharing and transportation network company, had a recent malfunction in their self-driving cars program when a car hit Elaine Herzberg and sadly killed her. Reportedly, she was walking her bike across the street at night in Tempe, Arizona when the car did not sense her on its sensors and they collided. This created a huge fall back in the world of self-driving cars because of the obvious mistake. Uber is currently unable to continue with their testing in Arizona until future notice. Uber has taken a step back from continuing to test in California as well, and other companies have started to slow down their own experimentation. It is obvious that all of the companies that are creating self-driving cars need to increase and maximize the sensors and safety measures on the cars. This is the key step for these cars to ever be a common vehicle on the public road.

The car manufacturers that are at the forefront of the creation of self driving cars are companies including BMW, Volvo, Mercedes Benz, and Toyota. Other companies like Google, Uber, and Lyft are also creating self driving cars. All of these companies are racing to be the first to release self driving cars on the public roads. The current estimation for the release of these cars is 2020, but with the current setbacks and mistakes, the date could be pushed back depending on what will happen with testing and developing in the next two years.

Even if these companies are successful and the cars become more reliable and functional, the biggest and most important part of the success of self-driving cars is convincing the people that they are safe.

Students at NPA had many different views about self-driving cars. A general student consensus was that they would not be a passenger in a self-driving car on a road along with human drivers. However, once they are mass produced almost everybody said they would be willing to be a passenger. Melissa Horne, a sophomore, said “Right now, no. However, in the future, I feel like their will be less chance of error.” Other students were more eager to hop in a self-driving car, but they do have some requirements of what would be happening. Emilia Von Einem Diggins, a senior, acknowledged the question about being in a self-driving car by answering with, “I would be a passenger in a self-driving car if I was not responsible for that self-driving car.”

Overall, our world is not quite ready for self-driving cars, but maybe by the time they are being mass produced we will be ready to accept them as a normal vehicle on the roads.



Good luck, Class of 2018!

From the Heron Herald

What is the NPA class of 2018 doing after graduation?

California

- Emilia Von Einem Diggins - CalArts, studying Music Performance and Composition
- Amelia Parker - California State University, Monterey Bay, studying Political Science and Journalism
- Maximus Landon - Mesa College, then transferring to San Diego State University, studying Linguistics
- Ruth Magee - University of California, Santa Cruz, studying Environmental Science and Conservation
- Sarah Hasiuk - University of California, Santa Cruz, studying Human Biology
- Alder Young - University of San Diego, studying Mechanical Engineering
- Isaiah Lockard - Humboldt State University (after gap year) studying Physics and Engineering
- Aaron Oliphant - Humboldt State University studying Theater and Business
- Gaby Saavedra - Humboldt State University studying English
- Mel Wardinski - Humboldt State University studying Studio Art
- Alexandria White - Humboldt State University studying Pre Med and Theatre, then planning to attend UCSF
- D’mitri Woodruff - Humboldt State University studying Technical Theater and Computer Science

Indiana

- Omar Gad - Manchester University, studying Political Science and Philosophy

Massachusetts

- Mattea Denney - Amherst College, studying Law, Jurisprudence, and Social Thought and Theater

Washington

- Celeste Kastel Riggan - (after gap year) University of Puget Sound, studies undecided

Canada

- Ryan Meshulam - University of British Columbia, studying Electrical Engineering

England

- James George - University of East London, studying History
- Erica Davis - Liverpool John Moores University, studying Forensic Anthropology

Students taking a gap year

- Keaton Sullivan - Gap year in Humboldt, working to develop VR game
- Leila Moss - Gap year in Alaska and South America
- Fiona Shaughnessy - Gap year in Denmark

NPA Alumni going to college next year

- Carl Alexanderssen - University of Edinburgh (Scotland), studying English Literature
- Victoria Roberts - UC Davis, studying Health Sciences



Charter Schools? It’s up for debate

By Somerset Nielsen
Staff Writer

Charter schools across the United States have been in the news recently for various controversies, from minor instances of malpractice to direct violations of the law. The national debate over whether or not charter schools are as beneficial as they claim to be has grown significantly since the first charter schools arose over 25 years ago. Northcoast Preparatory Academy, or NPA, has been around since the early charter schools in California, and has dealt with the impacts of this nationwide debate since its founding in 2001. Another charter school in Humboldt County, Alder Grove Charter School, is even facing a lawsuit of its own. With the charter school debate continuously growing, most students and their families are unaware of the difference between charter schools, public schools, and private schools, let alone the complicated details of the debate.

A charter school is a school that receives government funding, but is independently run. Private schools differ from charter schools because they are independently run and they do not receive any government aid. Charter schools are established by groups of teachers, parents, or other members of a community under the terms of a charter, which is a document that defines the rights and functions of the school, and are officially chartered by a local or state authorizing agency. NPA is chartered directly by the Humboldt County Office of Education, for example. Charter schools have certain requirements that they have to meet for their certification, and according to NPA’s principal, Michael Bazemore, these requirements, “cover things like educational curriculum, student well-being, and financial accountability; the basic things that you would expect a school to do.” Aside from these basic requirements, there is a fairly reasonable degree of flexibility to how a charter school can be run, and every charter school has a different way of meeting the needs of its students. Over the years, new legislation has been introduced that compromises this flexibility, but Bazemore says that “it hasn’t compromised NPA’s curriculum.”

The purpose of charter schools is to provide an alternative to traditional schools, and give students and families more options to choose from when looking for schools that would best suit their needs. “The important thing about a charter school is that it should offer something to the community that is not being offered by the traditional public schools in the area. Ideally, we don’t want to be redundant and just redo a program that’s being offered somewhere else. From my perspective, that is what a charter school should do. It should meet a need, and it should provide a curriculum that is not being offered in the traditional public schools,” says Bazemore. The two areas of emphasis that Bazemore identifies for NPA are the academics offered through the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme, and the individualized opportunities for students in the arts and sciences. Bazemore emphasizes that, “there’s more to NPA and its philosophy and goals than the IB programme, but the two are very closely aligned, and it’s a programme that incorporates the components of academic excellence, international mindedness, and civic duty that we think are very important for young people to be exposed to. We think that, at NPA, we are able to focus on those things in a way that isn’t possible in a standard public school framework. So, I do believe we offer that kind of an opportunity for families in the community.” For NPA, Bazemore says that being a charter school works well because it “allows us to focus on those things without being a comprehensive high school and having to offer all of the other components that a comprehensive high school would have.” NPA junior Isus Otis comments on this by saying that if NPA were a traditional public school, “it would have a lot more students who weren’t as inclined towards the academics and the arts, and they wouldn’t really care about what they were learning in school, so that would definitely sway my decision to be here because I do want to be around people who actually care about their academics and what they’re interested in and passionate about.” Being a charter school is a very important component of NPA and many other charter schools for this reason, as its structure allows the schools to be independently run and meet the needs of the specific community.

Originally, charter schools were a progressive movement, and they were intended to be a way to experiment with new types of education without bureaucracy. Some critics of charter schools, however, have argued that they are shifting towards conservatism. These critics make the points that charter schools have become a movement to privatize education and attack teachers’ unions, as most charter schools are privately run and non-unionized. Additionally, members of the Republican party have been the strongest supporters of charter schools since the beginning, and a large part of this has to do with the concept of competition between traditional and charter schools. The introduction of charter schools brought on a conflict between traditional and charter schools that has only worsened in recent years. Charter schools offered students an alternative to the traditional school that they were otherwise forced to attend, but this meant that traditional schools were losing students, and were therefore losing funding. As more students began choosing charter schools over traditional ones, the traditional schools began to introduce new programs to draw student interest back to them. This competition seemed very productive to govern-



PHOTO BY SARAH HASIUK
The label of “charter school’ is a controversial one to have, but NPA wears it proudly. Charter schools have been misunderstood throughout their existence in the educational system, but they aim to do the same as public schools: educate.

ment officials because it would encourage schools to make more improvements. An example of this is how NPA was founded because of the local demand for better arts education. Over the years the Northern Humboldt Union High School District has grown their arts program with the founding of the Arcata Arts Institute. Similarly, in recent years McKinleyville High School introduced their own IB program.

This issue, however, is much more prevalent in large cities. The high amounts of students choosing charter schools over traditional schools is causing the rapid decline of the quality of education at the traditional schools due to lack of funding. The lottery system for admission that most charter schools have adopted causes outrage among many families who feel their children are being given an unfair disadvantage by being forced to attend the traditional schools. The idea behind the lottery system is that it prevents any kind of discrimination in the admissions process, but it still leaves many students feeling frustrated and left behind. Charter schools are designed to be schools of choice, meaning that students choose to go there over the default traditional schools, but not everyone who chooses it is guaranteed a spot.

This is a discussion that has been recently brought up at NPA. The incoming freshmen classes are evenly split between students coming from the NPA Middle School and students coming from elsewhere, but the reserved spots for middle schoolers are causing concern among some students who view this as unfair for the incoming freshmen that still have to go through the traditional lottery system. On this issue, Bazemore explained that “it isn’t our goal to create an insular program that excludes people from outside, so we maybe could create a charter that reserved a certain number of spots for people from the outside when we do our charter reauthorization. It’s a legitimate concern and it’s not something that’s happening now, but it could come up in the future.”

Many critics of charter schools often argue that these schools are taking the smarter and more talented students away from traditional schools, but Bazemore disputes this idea with the concept that a charter school is not the right alternative for an individual just because they are intelligent or talented. “In the case of NPA in particular, we do want the people who come to NPA to be seeking a challenge, to be seeking to grow over the course of their four years.” Bazemore elaborated, “A big influence for us is to prepare students for college, admission to selective colleges, and possible leadership positions later in life, so it’s a more ambitious program, and it’s not right for everybody for that reason. Really, for me, the thing for NPA is: Do you want to challenge yourself? Do you value the curriculum? Do you want to keep growing and are you excited about doing that?”

Ultimately, the debate on charter schools and their role in education in the United States is incredibly complicated. To Bazemore, “one thing that appears to be the case is that charter schools have now been established as permanent. There are so many of them that you can’t go back at this point, so I think maybe the debate should focus more on what the appropriate way to facilitate growing schools is, rather than ‘should there be or should there not be charter schools?’ At this point, they are in the educational code. There are so many charter schools out there, it seems like it’s more about figuring out how to make it a good addition to the educational community.”

Spring Cabaret

By Autumn Wright
Staff Writer

Music and song recently filled the Arcata Theatre Lounge for the annual spring cabaret. The (biannual) cabaret brought together the NPA community to watch the talented students, perform on stage.

The Cabaret is an annual NPA tradition, similar to a talent show. “It’s an event for students who are interested in performing art to get themselves out there,” Nelli Major, the student coordinator and stage manager, explained.

The cabaret usually happens twice a year. Although sometimes, there is no one to coordinate it, and it does not

end up happening. This was Major’s first time being the student coordinator for the cabaret. “It will be really interesting to do it again, I really enjoyed helping with [the cabaret],” Major said.

The spring cabaret was emceed by seniors Ryan Meshulam and Keaton Sullivan. There were many amazing performances by students who had not performed before. “We had a lot of people from the freshman class, but also from the other classes who got out there and performed for the first time” Major explained. The cabaret is a wonderful chance for students who enjoy performing, or have not performed on stage, to get a chance to perform in front of an audience.

Since the cabaret is not a significantly large event, there is no need for a lot of out-of-school preparation. “We didn’t have to do a lot of outside of school rehearsals which was cool, because I have a lot of stuff going on,” Jane McCaffrey explained, after performing in the show herself.

Although the cabaret is open to the community, the audiences are mainly filled with family members of the performers, as well as other students who are not performing. “I think if we could publicize it more, and make people aware that it’s going on in the community, than I think it could be a lot bigger,” Major expressed. “It would be cool if it could be more of the Arcata community.”

This years spring cabaret allowed opportunities for many students to perform. With the changing classes, the cabaret lineup changes every year. Every year there is a array of talented students. Many unique performances took place at this years spring cabaret. Caelum Zwiker performed drag under the persona of Cosmo. Cosmo took her dance moves across not only the stage, but around the audience. Nostalgia filled the Arcata Theatre Lounge for senior Sullivan, who performed the same song he did when he was a freshman. Sullivan performed his song with help from “Moon Milkshake,” a new NPA band.

The Cabaret, being a biannual event, allows twice the op-



PHOTO BY AMELIA PARKER
Caelum Zwiker kneels on the stage during the dramatic performance of his drag show. Zwiker was decked out in a long curly wig and shockingly tall high heels. He paraded through the crowd and jumped on and off stage which completely mesmerized the audience.

portunity for students to participate. If students are not able to participate in the fall Cabaret, they have another chance to perform at the spring Cabaret. McCaffrey explained how she was not able to participate in the fall Cabaret because of a prior commitment. However, she was able to sing a song at the spring Cabaret.

Once again, the biannual Cabaret has displayed the diverse talents of the NPA students and brought together the NPA community. “Next year, I’ll be better prepared because we learned a lot this year,” exclaimed Major. Like any event, there is always room for improvement, and the years ahead look bright for the NPA Cabaret. As long as NPA students have the drive to showcase their talents, the NPA Cabaret is bound to continue for many years to come.



PHOTO BY AMELIA PARKER
Keaton Sullivan (left) and Ryan Meshulam (right) pause for a moment between acts to converse with witty banter. The pair kept the audience amused while props were taken on and off stage between performances.



MYP Community Projects

Community service replaces traditional research projects

By Autumn Wright
Staff Writer

Preparing students for leadership roles and helping them shape the world they live in are a few aspects of the IB Middle Years Program (MYP) Community Project.

The goal of the Community Project is to, “get students engaged in their community, in a meaningful and lasting way,” NPA teacher and Community Project coordinator Arnold King said. Through the Community Project, the students learn how to identify a problem, come up with a solution, and take action in an accomplishable way.

“This project is a huge departure from what we used to do,” King said. In past years the freshmen and sophomores have completed two research papers every school year. “The sophomores are doing a personal project which is a little different from the research projects,” explained King.

Along with the project the students must complete a process journal and a reflection. Although the actual outcome of the project is not graded, the students have to at least “attempt their project, they’re not all going to be successful for various reasons, but they have to attempt it,” King explained.

Not all the projects are measurable, some of them are more abstract efforts, like education, or raising awareness about a certain topic. Eva Swartz and Olivia Joachim decided to do their project about gun control. “There is a certain part of the Arcata municipal code that we’re trying to change so that all gun owners have to buy gun locks,” said Joachim. They came up with the idea after a class discussion on gun violence and gun control, after the shooting in Parkland, Florida. “One of the ideas brought up was requiring gun lockers, and we were like ‘let’s do that for our community project!’” exclaimed Joachim.

Because they are tackling such a big topic, the students tried to consider the situation from all angles. They spread the word to their community. “We went to the March For Our Lives protest and we handed out flyers that we made to inform people about it,” said Swartz. The flyers even had the numbers for the Arcata city council for people to call, and have their voices heard. “We sent a letter to the city council, and then we spoke at one of their meetings,” Swartz explained. After the meeting, Swartz and Joachim, “got a letter from the mayor [Sophia Pereira] asking if we would like to be a part of the process,” explained Joachim. The pair has meet with Mayor Pereira. They then returned to a city council meeting with an updated proposal. They came with an ordinance from San Diego, as an example to go off of. The pair also made a fact sheet. The city attorney is going to look over their fact sheet and decide if it is a topic they are able to discuss at the next city council meeting, and later see if they could draft an ordinance. The two students’ ideas have been in local newspapers, and they have done an interview on the radio. As they move on with their project, they have expressed their gratitude for the MYP community projects and how it has guided them towards community service and pushed them to take action in issues in their community.

“It’s hard work, but when you complete something like that, it definitely morally feels



PHOTO COURTESY OF JALENA RICCHIO

The students of Redwood Coast Montessori and NPA worked together to help clean up a beach near the Montessori school, led by NPA freshman Aiden Miele. Miele chose to work with the school because their campus is so close to the beach, and he wanted to help them make their environment more pleasant and safe.

really good,” freshman Aiden Miele expressed.

Miele is doing a beach clean up for his Community Project. The students were able to seek help from other people in the community. “The reason we chose it is because my partner is from Redwood Coast Montessori, and their campus is directly on the beach,” explained Miele. He came up with this community project because of his old school Union Street Charter. They, “had to cancel their beach clean ups, because they found a syringe which is sad because it was a tradition there,” said Miele. He wants to make the beaches safe for people, and schools in the community, “it feels nice to know that this portion of the beach is going to be safe for everyone,” remarked Miele.

Although Miele’s incentive was to clean up syringes, the beach cleanup is for all types of trash. “We’re going to be going there and go through the dunes and pick up whatever we can find and come back and dispose of it,” explained Miele. They used Go Fund Me and raised two hundred dollars for covering the dumping and recycling fees for the trash.

Miele also wanted to educate people about syringes. My dad who’s a nurse is going to come in and he’s going to bring a sharps disposal container in case we find a syringe,” said Miele. “He is also going to do a small presentation about what to do if you find one.”

The Community Projects help students work with ideas that interest them. It helps them learn how to organize and prepare. “I want our students to help find solutions toward world peace, but in order to be a peacemaker at that scale, you also need to be able to organize a beach cleanup, a food drive, or a park beautification,” exclaimed King.

“I think it’s a good way to help out our community,” remarked Zipporah Gaskill, who is working with a group to put up signs to remind people to slow down on the street in front of NPA. “It really forces students to take initiative on projects. If all of us accomplish our projects it’s going to have a large impact.”

It is important for students to take on projects that interest them, and the Community Projects help them begin a process of learning. “Those are the stepping stones, and too often in our education, we skip those stepping stones,” King acknowledged.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JALENA RICCHIO

Redwood Coast Montessori students traverse the dunes in search of trash during Aiden Miele’s beach cleanup. The freshman’s inspiration for the project was the prevalence of syringes which could shut down other beach clean-ups, and part of the cleanup involved education on what to do if a syringe was found. He also fundraised for proper disposal and recycling of the rest of the trash.



SCREENSHOT FROM ARCATA CITY COUNCIL MEETING, 5/16/2018

Eva Swartz (left) and Olivia Joachim (right) present their plan regarding gun control to the Arcata City Council. Inspired by the recent school shooting in Parkland, Florida, they want gun owners to have to purchase gun safes to make our community safer.

Amy Chalfant brings new passion to NPA

By Abram Rau
Staff Writer

an option for art, and musical theater as an elective. This year was the first year the musical theater elective was offered.

Musical theater was preceded by a voice elective, where students could work on their vocal skills. In the new elective, students learn about acting and singing. “We study old musicals, and then we learn their songs and how to act while we’re singing,” junior Liana Freeman said. The group studies musicals from many different time periods as well as the songs in them, and then performs them in order to grasp a better understanding of singing while acting.

The hard work that the students have put into their training has been rewarded by an opportunity to travel to Sacramento to see the play “An American in Paris.” Junior Sofia Escudero remarked that the play was a “really amazing, a well done performance.” In order to fund such a large excursion, the class performed their Gershwin reviews at an after school event. The reviews were medleys of songs by George and Ira Gershwin, a well known musical composer duo who wrote musicals such as “Porgy and Bess” and “Crazy for You.” “We had tuxedos and ball gowns, it was very fancy” Escudero recalled. When she looks back on this year of musical theater, Escudero thought that it was “one of the best parts of the year.”



PHOTO BY ABRAM RAU

Amy Chalfant (far right) sits on the piano bench in the social hall while instructing students who take the musical theater elective. The musical theater elective is new to NPA this year and students who participate in it are eager to learn songs from various musicals and also how to act while singing.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY CHALFANT

NPA’s musical theater elective students stand together after a successful performance of The Gershwin Review. The students were clothed head to toe in the finest of evening attire.



Artist’s Diploma Presentations



PHOTO BY SARAH HASIUK
Senior Mel Wardynski (left) discusses her work this semester with teacher Marceau Verdieri (right). An important aspect of achieving an Artist's Diploma requires setting goals and working towards achieving them. Visual artists are required to articulate their progress over the past semester and demonstrate their development with displays of artwork.



PHOTO BY SARAH HASIUK
Clothespinned to the wall, a variety of art pieces demonstrate the many different mediums used by students, including printmaking, watercolor, and opaque painting. Challenging oneself is a core principle of the Artist's Diploma program, and this encourages students to expand their artistic horizons. Visual arts can be a difficult and time-consuming process, most students involved choose the program since they are very passionate about the subject.



PHOTO BY SARAH HASIUK
These landscape paintings were just a few of the many which lined the walls and tables of the art studio. For the exhibition, the art studio was transformed into a gallery where culinary arts, digital presentations, and all types of visual arts were displayed to visitors. Students worked diligently to prepare the space for the show, and this year the Artist's Diploma criterion included creating a few pieces which would suit the space.

ROV camping trip



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARNOLD KING
Left to right: Hayden Pimsner, Areilla Adams, Theo Cress, Ian Long, Conrad McConnell, Nick McCurley, Ryan Meshulam and Logan Smith. These students from the underwater ROV elective recently took an overnight field trip to Lake Pillsbury to test their craft. Teacher Arny King noted the experience was a lot of fun, the lake was gorgeous and that, “the ROV went the farthest we have ever sent it, however, it tangled in lake grass and the port motor failed.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARNOLD KING
Ryan Meshulam works some calculations on his laptop by the shore of Lake Pillsbury. Meshulam, a senior, has been a dedicated member of the ROV elective.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ABIGAIL OLMSTEAD
From left to right: NPA graduates Tadesse Samelson, Kiri Buppert, Abigail Olmstead, and Anna Schneider. Tadesse, who passed away on April 4th, 2018, was an amazing dancer and a great friend to all who knew him. The NPA community mourns this loss, celebrates his life, and will always remember him and his infectious smile.

In remembrance: Tadesse Samelson

By Mattea Denney
Staff Writer

The NPA community is fondly remembering former student, Tadesse Samelson, after he passed away at the age of 25 near Boulder City, NV on April 4, 2018.

While being an active student at NPA, Samelson was an avid dancer, participating heavily in Humboldt County’s dance community. During his time in Humboldt, he worked his way to becoming a principal company soloist and teacher at North Coast Dance, while also dancing in many local full-length productions. He later took his talents beyond Humboldt County by continuing his dance career at the National Ballet School of Canada and the San Francisco Ballet School.

His friends remember him as a lively and kind student. He was passionate about many of his school subjects, as well as his extracurricular involvement in dance. “He was such an incredibly talented dancer,” one of his close friends and NPA alumnus Abigail Olmstead, remembered. “That was definitely his thing.” Samelson knew he wanted to pursue dance, and worked hard to perfect his craft, as well as teach the younger generation dancers in Humboldt. He and his family were also connected to the Arcata United Methodist Church, where NPA is currently operating.

“He was just a hilarious guy,” Olmstead reminisced. “He was super gregarious and friends with everyone. I just remember how warm and silly he was with everyone that he met. Olmstead and Samelson met before he came to high school, but they grew to be close friends over the years. “He and I met when I was in high school and he was in eighth grade, and we became friends right away because he was just so funny and goofy. It was really easy for him to make friends.

Samelson is warmly remembered by his friends, family, and peers as a bright, charismatic, and enthusiastic person.